

THE BITTER ATTILA.

A BRIEF VIEW OF THE STAR CALLED WORMWOOD.

Rev. Dr. Talmage on Brilliant Bitterness and Its Results—Scolding and Greeting. The Sweetening Power of the Gospel. Safety in Righteousness.

WASHINGTON, June 14.—It was appropriate that this sermon on the destiny of nations should be preached in what has long been called the president's church (because Presidents Jackson and Pierce and Polk and Cleveland have attended it). Dr. Talmage chose for his text Revelation viii, 10, 11, "There fell a great star from heaven, burning as it were a lamp, and it fell upon the third part of the rivers, and upon the fountains of waters, and the name of the star is called Wormwood."

Many commentators, like Patrick and Lowth, Thomas Scott, Matthew Henry and Albert Barnes agree in saying that the star Wormwood, mentioned in Revelation, was Attila, king of the Huns. He was so called because he was brilliant as a star, and, like wormwood, he embittered everything he touched. We have studied the Star of Bethlehem, and the Morning Star of the Revelation, and the Star of Peace, but my present subject calls us to gaze at the star Wormwood, and my theme might be called Brilliant Bitterness.

A more extraordinary character history does not furnish than this man thus referred to, Attila, the king of the Huns. One day a wounded heifer came limping along through the fields, and a herdsman followed its bloody track on the grass to see where the heifer was wounded, and went on back further and further, until he came to a sword fast in the earth, the point downward, as though it had dropped from the heavens and against the edges of this sword the heifer had been cut. The herdsman pulled up that sword and found it to be Attila. Attila said that sword must have dropped from the heavens from the grasp of the god Mars and its being given to him meant that Attila should conquer and govern the whole earth.

Other mighty men have been delighted at being called liberators, or the merciful, or the good, but Attila called himself, and demanded that others call him, the Scourge of God. At the head of 700,000 troops, mounted on Cyprian horses, he swept everything from the Adriatic to the Black sea. He put his iron heel on Macedonia and Greece and Thrace. He made Milan and Ravenna and Padua and Verona beg for mercy, which he bestowed not. The Byzantine castles, to meet his ruinous levy, put up at auction massive silver tables and vases of solid gold. A city captured by him, the inhabitants were brought out and put into three classes—the first class, those who could bear arms, who must immediately enlist under Attila or be butchered; the second class, the beautiful women, who were made captives to the Huns; the third class, the aged men and women, who were robbed of everything and let go back to the city to pay heavy taxes.

Rise of the Star.

It was a common saying that the grass never grew again where the hoof of Attila's horse had trod. His armies reddened the waters of the Seine, and the Moselle, and the Rhine with carnage and fought on the Catalonian plains the fiercest battle since the world stood—800,000 dead left on the field! On and on until all those who could not oppose him with arms lay prostrate on their faces in prayer, and a cloud of dust seen in the distance, a bishop cried, "It is the aid of God!" and all the people took up the cry, "It is the aid of God!" As the cloud of dust was blown aside the banners of re-enslaving armies marched in to help against Attila, the Scourge of God. The most important occurrences he used as a supernatural resource, and after three months of failure to capture the city of Aquileia, and his army had given up the siege the flight of a stork and her young from the tower of the city was taken by him as a sign that he was to capture the city, and his army, inspired by the same occurrence, resumed the siege and took the walls at a point from which the stork had emerged. So brilliant was the conqueror in attire that his enemies could not look at him, but shaded their eyes or turned their heads.

Slain on the evening of his marriage by his bride, Ildico, who was hired for the assassination, his followers bewailed him, not with tears, but with blood, cutting themselves with knives and lances. He was put into three coffins, the first of iron, the second of silver and the third of gold. He was buried by night, and into his grave were poured the most valuable coin and precious stones, amounting to the wealth of a kingdom. The gravediggers and all those who assisted at the burial were massacred, so that it would never be known where so much wealth was entombed. The Roman empire conquered the world, but Attila conquered the Roman empire. He was right in calling himself a scourge, but instead of being the Scourge of God he was the scourge of hell. Because of his brilliance and bitterness the commentators were right in believing him to be the star Wormwood. As the regions he devastated were parts most opulent with fountains and streams and rivers, you see how graphic is this reference in Revelation: "There fell a great star from heaven, burning as it were a lamp, and it fell upon the third part of the rivers and upon the fountains of waters, and the name of the star is called Wormwood."

Have you ever thought how many imbibed lives there are all about us, misanthropic, morbid, acrid, saturnine? The European plant from which wormwood is extracted, *Artemisia absinthium*, is a perennial plant, and all the year round it is ready to exude its oil. And in many human lives there is a perennial distillation of acrid experiences. Yea, there are some whose whole work is to shed a baleful influence on others.

There are Attilas of the home, or Attilas of the social circle, or Attilas of the church, or Attilas of the state, and one-third of the waters of all the world, if not two-thirds the waters, are poisoned by the falling of the star Wormwood. It is not complimentary to human nature that most men, as soon as they get great power, become overbearing. The more power men have the better if their power be used for good. The less power men have the better if they use it for evil.

Birds circle round and round and round before they swoop upon that which they are aiming for. And if my discourse so far has been swinging round and round this moment it drops straight on your heart and asks the question, Is your life a benediction to others or an imbecility, a blessing or a curse, a balsam or wormwood?

Some of you I know are morning stars, and you are making the dawning life of your children bright with gracious influences, and you are beaming upon all the opening enterprises of philanthropic and Christian endeavor, and you are heralds of that day of gospelization which will yet flood all the mountains and valleys of our sin-cursed earth. Hail, morning star! Keep on shining with encouragement and Christian hope!

Growlers and Scolds.

Some of you are evening stars, and you are cheering the last days of old people, and though a cloud sometimes comes over you through the querulousness or unreasonableness of your old father and mother it is only for a moment, and the star soon comes out clear again and is seen from all the balconies of the neighborhood. The old people will forgive your occasional shortcomings, for they themselves several times lost their patience when you were young and slapped you when you did not deserve it. Hail, evening star! Hang on to the darkening sky your diamond coronet!

But are any of you the star Wormwood? Do you scold and growl from the thrones paternal or maternal? Are your children everlastingly pecked at? Are you always crying "Hush!" to the merry voices and swift feet, and their laughter, which occasionally trickles through at wrong times and is suppressed by them until they can hold it no longer, and all the barriers burst into unlimited guffaw and exultation, as in high weather the water has trickled through a slight opening in the milldam, but afterward makes wider and wider breach until it carries all before it with irresistible freshness? Do not be too much offended at the noise your children now make. It will be still enough when one of them is dead. Then you would give your right hand to hear one shout from their silent voices or one step from the still foot. You will not any of you have to wait very long before your house is still as the tomb. Alas, that there are so many homes not known to the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children, where children are put on the limits and whacked and cuffed and flogged and senselessly called to order and answered sharp and suppressed until it is a wonder that under such processes they do not all turn out Modocs and Nana Sahibs.

What is your influence upon the neighborhood, the town or the city of your residence? I will suppose that you are a star of wit. What kind of rays do you shoot forth? Do you use that splendid faculty to irradiate the world or to rankle it? I bless all the apostolic college of humorists. The man that makes me laugh is my benefactor. I do not thank anybody to make me cry! I can do that without any assistance. We all cry enough, and have enough to cry about. God bless all skillful punsters, all reparteeists, all propounders of ingenious conundrums, all those who mirthfully surprise us with unusual juxtaposition of words. Thomas Hood and Charles Lamb and Sidney Smith had a divine mission, and so have their successors in these times. They stir into the acid beverage of life the saccharine. They make the cup of earthly existence, which is sometimes stale, effervescent and bubbly. They placate animosities. They foster longevity. They slay follies and absurdities which all the sermons of all the pulpits cannot reach.

Need of a Physician.

They have for examples Elijah, who made fun of the Baalites when they called down fire, and it did not come, suggesting that their heathen god had gone hunting, or was off on a journey, or was asleep, and nothing but vociferation could wake him, saying, "Cry aloud for he is a god. Either he is talking or pursuing or peradventure he sleepeth and must be awaked." They have an example in Christ, who with healthful sarcasm showed up the lying, hypocritical Pharisees by suggesting that such perfect people like themselves needed no improvements, saying, "The whole need not a physician but they that are sick."

But what use are you making of your wit? Is it besmirched with profanity and uncleanness? Do you employ it in amusement at physical defects for which the victims are not responsible? Are your powers of mimicry used to put religion in contempt? Is it a bunch of nettlesome invective? Is it a bolt of unjust scorn? Is it fun at other's misfortune? Is it glee at their disappointment and defeat? Is it bitterness put drop by drop into a cup? Is it like the squeezing of *Artemisia absinthium* into a draft already distastefully pungent? Then you are the star Wormwood. Yours is the fun of a rattlesnake trying how well it can sting. It is the fun of a hawk trying how quickly it can strike out the eye of a dove.

But I will change this and suppose you are a star of Worldly Prosperity. Then you have large opportunity. You can encourage that artist by buying his picture. You can improve the fields, the stables, the highway, by introducing higher style of fowl and horse and cow and sheep. You can bless the world with pomological achievement in the orchards. You can advance arboriculture and arrest this deathful iconoclasm of the American forests. You can put a piece of sculpture into the niche of that

public academy. You can endow a college. You can stock a thousand bare feet from the winter frost. You can build a church. You can put a mission-ary of Christ on that foreign shore. You can help ransom a world. A rich man with his heart right—can you tell me how much good a James Lenox or a George Peabody or a Peter Cooper or a William E. Dodge did while living, or is doing now that he is dead? There is not a city, town or neighborhood that has not glorious specimens of consecrated wealth.

But suppose you grind the face of the poor. Suppose when a man's wages are due you make him wait for them because he cannot help himself. Suppose that, because his family is sick and he has had extra expenses, he should politely ask you to raise his wages for this year and you roughly tell him if he wants a better place to go and get it. Suppose by your manner you let as though he were nothing and you were everything. Suppose you are selfish and overbearing and arrogant. Your first name ought to be Attila and your last name Attila, because you are the star Wormwood, and you have imbibed one-third if not three-thirds of the waters that roll past your employees and operatives and dependents and associates, and the long line of carriages which the undertaker orders for your funeral, in order to make the occasion respectable, will be filled with twice as many dry, tearless eyes as there are persons occupying them.

There is an erroneous idea abroad that there are only a few geniuses. There are millions of them—that is, men and women who have especial adaptation and quickness for some one thing. It may be great; it may be small. The circle may be like the circumference of the earth or no larger than a thumb. There are thousands of geniuses, and in some one thing you are a star. What kind of a star are you? You will be in this world but a few minutes. As compared with eternity the stay of the long life on earth is not more than a minute. What are we doing with that minute? Are we imbibing the domestic or social or political poisons, or are we like Moses, who, when the Israelites in the wilderness complained that the waters of Lake Marah were bitter and they could not drink them, cut off the branch of a certain tree and threw that branch into the water, and it became sweet and slaked the thirst of the suffering host? Are we with a branch of the Tree of Life sweetening all the brackish fountains that we can touch?

Three Wishes.

Dear Lord, send us all out on that mission. All around us imbibed lives—imbibed by persecution, imbibed by hypercriticism, imbibed by poverty, imbibed by pain, imbibed by injustice, imbibed by sin. Why not go forth and sweeten them by smile, by inspiring words, by benefactions, by hearty counsel, by prayer, by gospelized behavior? Let us remember that if we are wormwood to others we are wormwood to ourselves, and our life will be bitter and our eternity bitter. The gospel of Jesus Christ is the only sweetening power that is sufficient. It sweetens the disposition. It sweetens the manners. It sweetens life. It sweetens mysterious providences. It sweetens afflictions. It sweetens death. It sweetens everything. I have heard people asked in social company, "If you could have three wishes gratified, what would you three wishes be?" If I could have three wishes met this morning, I tell you what they would be: 1. More of the grace of God. 2. More of the grace of God. 3. More of the grace of God. In the dooryard of my brother John, missionary in Amoy, China, there was a tree called the emperor tree, the characteristics of which are that it always grows higher than its surroundings, and its leaves take the form of a crown. If this emperor tree be planted by a rosebush, it grows a little higher than the bush and spreads out above it a crown. If it be planted by the side of another tree, it grows a little higher than that tree and spreads above it a crown. Would God that this religion of Christ, a more wonderful emperor tree, might overshadow all your lives! Are you lowly in ambition or circumstance, putting over you its crown? Are you high in talent and position, putting over you its crown? Oh, for more of the saccharine in our lives and less of the wormwood!

What is true of individuals is true of nations. God sets them up to revolve as stars, but they may fall wormwood. Tyre, the atmosphere of the desert, fragrant with spices, coming in caravans from her fairs, all seas cleft into foam by the keels of her laden merchantmen, her markets rich with horses and camels from Togarmah, her bazaars filled with upholstery from Dedan, with wines from Helbon, with embroidered work from Ashur and Chilmad. Where now the gleam of her towers, where the roar of her chariots, where the masts of her ships? Let the fishermen who dry their nets where once she stood, let the sea that rushes upon the barrenness where once she challenged the admiration of all nations, let the barbarians who set their rude tents where once her palaces glittered, answer the question. She was a star, but by her own sin turned to wormwood and has fallen.

Turned to Wormwood.

Hundred gated Thebes, for all time to be the study of the antiquarian and hieroglyphist, her stupendous ruins spread over 27 miles, her sculptures presenting in figures of warrior and chariot the victories with which the now forgotten kings of Egypt shook the nations, her obelisks and columns, Carnac and Luxor, the stupendous temples of her pride! Who can imagine the greatness of Thebes in those days when the hippodrome rang with her sports and foreign royalty bowed at her shrine and her avenues roared with the wheels of processions in the wake of returning conquerors? What dashed down the vision of chariots and temples and thrones? What hands pulled upon the columns

of her glory? What ruthlessness defaced her sculptured wall and broke obelisks and left her indescribable temples great skeletons of granite? What spirit of destruction spread the lair of wild beasts in her royal sepulchers, and taught the miserable cottagers of today to build huts in the courts of her temples, and sent desolation and ruin skulking behind the obelisks, and dodging among the sarcophagi, and leaning against the columns, and stooping under the arches, and weeping in the waters which go mournfully by as though they were carrying the tears of all ages? Let the mummies break their long silence and come up to shiver in the desolation and point to fallen gates and shattered statues and defaced sculpture, responding: "Thebes built not one temple to God. Thebes hated righteousness and loved sin. Thebes was a star, but she turned to wormwood and has fallen."

Babylon, with her 250 towers and her brazen gates and her embattled walls, the splendor of the earth gathered within her palaces, her hanging gardens built by Nebuchadnezzar to please his bride, Amytis, who had been brought up in a mountainous country and could not endure the flat country round Babylon—these hanging gardens built, terrace above terrace, till at the height of 400 feet there were woods waving and fountains playing, the verdure, the foliage, the glory looking as if a mountain were on the wing. On the tiptop a king walking with his queen, among statues snowy white, looking up at birds brought from distant lands, and drinking out of tankards of solid gold or looking off over rivers and lakes upon nations subdued and tributary, crying, "Is not this great Babylon which I have built?"

What battering ram smote the walls? What plowshare upturned the gardens? What army shattered the brazen gates? What long, fierce blast of storm put out this light which illumined the world? What crash of discord drove down the music that poured from palace window and garden grove and called the banqueters to their revel and the dancers to their feet? I walk upon the scene of desolation to find an answer and pick up pieces of bitumen and brick and broken pottery, the remains of Babylon, and as in the silence of the night I hear the surging of that billow of desolation which rolls over the scene, I hear the wild waves saying: "Babylon was proud. Babylon was impure. Babylon was a star, but by sin she turned to wormwood and has fallen."

Possibilities.

From the persecutions of the pilgrim fathers and the Huguenots in other lands God set upon these shores a nation. The council fires of the aborigines went out in the greater light of a free government. The sound of the warwhoop was exchanged for the thousand wheels of enterprise and progress. The mild winters, the fruitful summers, the healthful skies charmed from other lands a race of hardy men who loved God and wanted to be free. Before the woodman's ax forests fell and rose again into ships' masts and other pillars. Cities on the banks of lakes began to rival cities by the sea. The land quakes with the rush of the rail car and the waters are churned white with the steamer's wheel. Fabulous bushels of western wheat meet on the way fabulous tons of eastern coal. Furs from the north pass on the rivers from the north. And trading in the same market is Maine lumberman and South Carolina rice merchant and Ohio farmer and Alaska fur dealer. And churches and schools and asylums scatter light and love and mercy and salvation upon 60,000,000 of people.

I pray that our nation may not copy the crimes of the nations that have perished and our cup of blessing turn to wormwood, and like them we go down. I am by nature and by grace an optimist, and I expect that this country will continue to advance until Christ shall come again. But be not deceived. Our only safety is in righteousness toward God and justice toward man. If we forget the goodness of the Lord to this land, and break his Sabbaths, and improve not by the dire disasters that have again and again come to us as a nation, and we learn saving lesson neither from civil war nor raging epidemic nor drought nor mildew nor scourge of locust and grasshopper nor cyclone nor earthquake; if the political corruption which has poisoned the fountains of public virtue and bedimed the high places of authority, making free government at times a hissing and a byword in all the earth; if the drunkenness and licentiousness that stagger and blaspheme in the streets of our great cities as though they were reaching after the fame of a Corinth and a Sodom are not repented of, we will yet see the smoke of our nation's ruin; the pillars of our national and state capitals will fall more disastrously than when Samson pulled down Dagon, and future historians will record upon the page bedewed with generous tears the story that the free nation of the west arose in splendor which made the world stare. It had magnificent possibilities. It forgot God. It hated justice. It hugged its crime. It halted on its high march. It reeled under the blow of calamity. It fell. And as it was going down all the despots of earth from the top of bloody thrones began to shout, "Aha, so would we have it!" while struggling and oppressed people looked out from dungeons, bars with tears and groans and cries of untold agony, the scorn of those and the woe of these uniting in the exclamation: "Look yonder! There fell a great star from heaven, burning as it were a lamp, and it fell upon the third part of the rivers and upon the fountains of waters, and the name of the star is called Wormwood!"

That Altered Case.

"Have you heard about young Morland? He has just walked off with \$0,000 francs of his employer's money." "Ha! ha! The lucky rascal!" "Besides, he has bolted with your umbrella." "Oh, the infernal scamp!"—Le Paillon.

MRS. ARMOUR'S \$10,000 ORDER.

It Was For Japanese Furnishings For the Smoking Room.

The placing of an order for Mrs. Ogden Armour of Chicago with a San Francisco firm for \$10,000 worth of Japanese art work and carving has brought to light the fact that when the artists shall have finished their work in her new residence there will be one room therein absolutely without a peer in point of treatment in this or any other country. This particular room will be the smoking room.

Two celebrated artists have collaborated in the work, one furnishing the general design for the treatment of the room, the other working out the detail and decorations.

It will be some time before the decorators can actually get to work putting the material in place, for much of it is to be specially imported. The furniture is all to be carved in Japan and China from special models, and the tapestries and upholstery are all to be specially made.

The room will be done in a prevailing tone—that is, a delicate division between old rose and old copper. The floor will be in parquet, with a profusion of specially woven Japanese rugs and mats.

The wall covering will be of silk brocade, the ground color of which, the old copper spoken of, will give the prevailing tone to the color scheme of the whole. In the weaving of this brocade a great deal of gold thread will be used, not merely to give lines and suggestions of color, but in masses of rich embossing.

The mural decorations are to be rare Kakimonos, in colors harmonizing with the tone of the room, but each one to be a worthy example of the best Japanese pictorial art, both in subject and treatment. Some of these will be hung like tapestries, while others will be framed with the general effect sought. Some of the Kakimonos already selected are the work of the most famous old masters of Japan.

The furniture is all to be of ebony inlaid with mother of pearl. The carving is all to be done in the orient by native artists, and the designs show a wealth and richness of carving seldom seen outside the palaces and temples of Japan. The catfish will abound in lacquer. They will be marvels of Japanese ingenuity in sliding panels, hidden doors and secret lockers and drawers. The lacquer will be the expensive and highly prized gold lacquer, in sharp but restful contrast with the carved black ebony.

The smoking outfits will be in silver and bronze, in grotesque forms. They will contain, after the Japanese manner, little receptacles to hold lighted charcoal and others to contain the paper tapers by which fire is transferred from the charcoal to the pipe or cigar. There will be unexpected compartments for the various kinds of tobacco, with ash trays that are the despair of the workers in hammered metals.

There will, of course, be Japanese screens and vases and jardinières in cloisonne and other varieties of Japanese pottery. Such another smoking room probably cannot be found in Christendom or out of it. And with the rapidity with which foreign goods and custom are coming into service in Japan it probably will not be long before there cannot be found, even in Japan, such a thoroughly Japanese apartment as the smoking room of Mrs. Ogden Armour's house.—Chicago Tribune.

New England Hasty Pudding.

It is not unlikely that many reading the proposition to bring the body of Joel Barlow "from its resting place near Crews" will wonder who Barlow was and why his body is in Poland. In 1811 he was minister to France, and in the fall of 1812 he was invited to a conference with Napoleon at Wilna. On his journey he was attacked with inflammation of the lungs, and he died at Zarnowich. It is singular that Hildreth, in his history of the United States, speaks of him as "Jacob Barlow" and says he died at Warsaw.

Does any one read Barlow's poem, "The Hasty Pudding," written at Chambery, where the delicious dish was unknown? We fear that the dish is despised here today by leaders in society and finance. Yet in warm weather there is nothing better for luncheon if it be served with bowls of milk. We can think of no more beautiful sight than that of a wealthy and prominent family in Commonwealth avenue sitting around the mahogany tree at the hour of 1. The father has left the office, forgetting the negotiation of a colossal loan in the rapt thought of hasty pudding. Loving wife, fond eyed grandmother, athletic son, comely daughter, grasp their spoons firmly and are as one in the enjoyment. There is at last the calm that follows judicious deglutition. Such refreshment once characterized the true New Englander. The Roman with his turnips was not a more heroic figure.—Boston Journal.

Lived Like a Pauper; Died Rich.

Miss Elizabeth B. Cook of Bridgeport, a little hamlet in Fayette county, Pa., always lived as though she were a pauper. Recently she died without medical attention or friends present, and the exact circumstances of her death are not known. She was found lying upon the floor some time after her death. Dr. H. J. English was made administrator, and he got a firm of attorneys to look around and see what her few effects amounted to. The inventory of the estate shows that she was the owner of over \$22,000 of bank stock. She also had over \$28,000 in cash on deposit, and was the holder of ten shares of stock in the Pittsburgh, Virginia and Charleston Railroad company. Nearly \$2,500 in gold coin and \$100 in silver coin and bank notes were found sealed up tight in an old fruit can in her home after her death. The property will go to nephews, nieces and grand nephews and grandnieces.—Philadelphia Times.

HEEDLESS WOMEN.

They Pay a Sad Penalty for Their Neglect.

If women only heeded first symptoms—nervousness, headache, lassitude, loss of appetite and sleep; palpitation, melancholy, "blues," etc., and at once removed the cause with Lydia E. Pinkham's Vegetable Compound, there would be much less suffering. But they are careless, or their physician is to blame, and they drift into some distressing female disease. The Vegetable Compound at once removes all irregularities of the monthly period; inflammation, ulceration and displacement of the womb, and all female troubles. All druggists have it. Write to Mrs. Pinkham at Lynn, Mass., if you wish for advice, which she will give you free.

"I should not be alive to-day, if it had not been for Lydia E. Pinkham's Vegetable Compound. I was suffering greatly from an attack of female weakness, and nothing I had tried could give me relief; when by the advice of a friend I began the Compound. After using it two months I was a different girl, and now at the end of six I am entirely cured."—MRS. ANNIE KIRKLAND, Patchogue, L. I.

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Steel Pennyroyal Pills
are the original and only
FRENCH, safe and reliable cure
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Pastor C. P. Church, Clayton, Ark.: Sold by all druggists at \$1.00 per box; 100 boxes, (thirty days' treatment), \$25.00, with iron clad, written guarantee, or sent direct upon receipt of price. Write for booklet and proofs. Eureka Chemical and Mfg. Co., La Crosse, Wis., and Boston, Mass., 46-60ms.



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